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ABSTRACT

This document reports on activities of the Northeast Regional Resource Center (Vermont), which has provided technical assistance, consultation, and training concerning educational programs and services for children and youth with disabilities, to state education agencies and through the state agencies to local education agencies. Specific sections address the Center's goals and objectives, its approach and basic assumptions, activities, evaluation findings, and impact. Five types of activities were conducted: (1) identifying and documenting significant needs, problems, issues, and emerging trends; (2) developing state-specific, multistate, and region-wide technical assistance plans; (3) designing and delivering technical assistance; (4) coordinating program activities with other Regional Resource Centers and related technical assistance projects; and (5) project administration. Among the areas addressed by the Center's technical assistance activities were the following: improving options for students in the least restrictive environment while coordinating with "restructuring" efforts; planning comprehensive systems of personnel development; creating mechanisms for increasing parental involvement in the educational process; focusing on the needs of racial, cultural, or linguistic minorities; implementing program evaluation models, procedures, and techniques; applying new technologies to instruction and administration; and developing models, programs, and services for seriously emotionally disturbed students. Brochures describing the Center and the Institute for Program Development are attached. (Author/DB)

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Northeast Regional Resource Center

FINAL REPORT

August 30, 1993

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs
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Kenneth Baker, Director
Edith Beatty, Associate Director

Institute for Program Development
Trinity College of Vermont
208 Colchester Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 658-5036

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FINAL REPORT

August 30, 1993

The Northeast Regional Resource Center
Institute for Program Development
Trinity College of Vermont
208 Colchester Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 658-5036

The Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC)
is a program of Trinity College of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont.
NERRC is funded by the U.S. Department of Education,
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services,
Special Education Programs.
Cooperative Agreement #H028A10009

Abstract

The Northeast Regional Resource Center

Providing leadership and support within the Northeast States to promote a quality education for all learners

The Northeast Regional Resource Center provides technical assistance, consultation and training to state education agencies and through them local education agencies relating to educational programs and services for children and youth with disabilities. The programs and services of NERRC are specifically designed to assist in assuring that educational policies and procedures result in quality programs for students with disabilities. In a cooperative agreement with OSEP, the Northeast Regional Resource Center designed and implemented five types of activities to effectively achieve its mission of providing leadership and support within the educational community:

- Identifying and documenting significant needs, problems, issues and emerging trends;
- Developing state-specific, multi-state and region-wide technical assistance plans;
- Designing and delivering responsive, flexible technical assistance that promotes the improvement of educational and related services to students with disabilities and their families;
- Coordinating program activities with other Regional Resource Centers and technical assistance projects conducted by the Department of Education; and
- Effectively and efficiently administering the project, fully developing and utilizing its resources.

NERRC provides specific technical assistance regarding problems unique to individual states and implements multi-state and region-wide programs which address identified needs in the following areas:

- Improving options for students in the Least Restrictive Environment while coordinating with the "restructuring" efforts in general education implemented across the Northeast.
- SEA monitoring, implementing federal corrective action plans, monitoring and approving local agency applications and hearing officer training.

- Planning Comprehensive Systems of Personnel Development and assisting in the retention and recruitment of quality personnel, increasing the numbers of minority personnel in the profession.

- Creating mechanisms and strategies for increasing parental involvement in the educational process particularly to involve minority and "hard-to-reach parents."

- Focusing on the needs of an increasingly diverse group of students with disabilities including racial, cultural and linguistic minorities and an increasingly larger group of medically fragile children.

- Improving the quality of special education services by implementing program evaluation models, procedures and techniques and using their results.

- Applying new technologies to instruction and administration to improve programs and student outcomes.

- Transition planning to improve the outcomes for students with disabilities.

- Developing appropriate models, programs and services for seriously emotionally disturbed students.

- Responding to a great number of fiscal and programmatic issues and their impacts across the Northeast region.

- Accessing medicaid and other third-party payors for related services.

Northeast Regional Resource Center staff provided technical assistance to more than four thousand state and local educational administrators, parents, teachers, and related services personnel in the two-year span of this cooperative agreement. Teleconferences, workshops, forums, regional meetings and publications targeted needs, effectively impacting systems change and addressing immediate issues and concerns. Specific objectives and activities described in this final report define the why and the how we do business; personalized vignettes define the heart of it.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Lois Holbrook for preparing this Final Technical Report representing the highlights of NERRC's work from June 1991 through August 1993. Thanks also to Norma Sheehan, Jan Theriault and Cathleen Palmer who assisted with the production of the report, as well as provided assistance with our entire workscope throughout the two years; thanks to Linda Murray who edited our prose; and Godfrey Stephen who provided technology support. Much appreciation to Edward Wilkens who joined us in progress and "gave voice" to the impactful work of key staff, Art Cernosia, Karen Thomas Mikkelsen, C.G. Shaffer and Lois Holbrook; to Lucy Ely Pagán who had spirit and courage to join us near the end in anticipation of continuance.

Our deepest appreciation goes to Kenneth Baker whose vision and leadership brought NERRC to Trinity College in 1980 and who directed NERRC through growth and four contract/grant periods until 1993.

Finally, our gratitude to our many audience members of the Northeast Region, Region #1, our Advisory Committee members, participants and state consumers, family members, service providers, the greater community with whom we work.

Many thanks to all!

Edith Beatty, Director
August 30, 1993

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SECTION I

Goals and Objectives of the Project

I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The general purpose of the Regional Resource Center's program is to provide consultation, technical assistance and training, as requested, to State Departments of Education, local education agencies, Part H Lead agencies, and other public agencies which provide early intervention, special education, and related services for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families. NERRC staff fully implemented its proposed Plan of Operation with goals and objectives consistent with those of the Cooperative Agreement. They included:

Goal #1: NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Identification and documentation of significant needs, problems, issues and emerging trends.

Objectives:

- Conduct needs assessments and plan technical assistance activities with SEAs, LEAs and OSEP.

- Assist in identifying and solving problems in the provision of educational and related services.

Goal #2: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITY PLANNING: Development of state-specific, multi-state and region-wide technical assistance plans.

Objectives:

- Collaborate with each of the region's SEAs and representatives of groups participating in the needs assessments to plan the delivery of technical assistance.

- Complete cost-effective technical assistance agreements designed to maximize long-range impact while targeting high priority state needs.

Goal #3: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVISION TO THE NORTHEAST STATES: Design and deliver responsive, flexible technical assistance that promotes and assists systems change.

Objectives:

- Provide consultation, technical assistance and training to SEAs, LEAs and other public service providers.

- Address new and emerging issues such as diverse populations (e.g., minority, medically fragile, recruitment and retention of personnel).

- Improve outcomes for students with disabilities in transition.

- Conduct workshops, topical meetings and conferences linking professionals and parents for the purposes of information dissemination, problem definition and analysis, action planning, outcome evaluation and direct student impact.

Goal #4: COLLABORATION, NETWORKING AND LINKAGES: Coordinate efforts and exchange knowledge with the RRC Network, the Federal Resource Center, OSEP and its funded technical assistance projects, development centers and other relevant projects and agencies.

Objectives:

- Network and collaborate with RRCs, OSEP, technical assistance providers and others with information.

- Gather and disseminate information to SEAs in collaboration with others using state-of-the-art communication technologies.

Goals #5: MANAGEMENT PLAN: Efficient and effective administration of the project.

Objectives:

- Ensure proper utilization of personnel and resources, timely completion of high-quality work and overall program accountability.

- Maintain and utilize pertinent input from the NERRC Advisory Committee, the State Liaison System, the Internal Management Team and the Project Coordination Team.

SECTION II

Approach and Basic Assumptions

II. APPROACH AND BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The theoretical or conceptual framework for NERRC's operation and activities is based upon the following findings and assumptions which influence our approach.

* The ***needs assessment*** process for development of technical assistance activities:

  - should involve all relevant audiences.

  - is, itself, an important form of assistance as participants clarify current obstacles and increase their capabilities to better examine and address future problems and needs.

  - should result in information for careful analysis in a variety of ways, with subsequent data accurately and efficiently managed, used and reported.

  - while targeted to be state-specific, will provide opportunities for dialogue and peer consultation across states in the northeast region.

* Planning and providing ***consultation***, ***technical assistance*** and ***training***:

  - should be based on state and regional high priority needs in close coordination with each SEA, OSEP and the NERRC Advisory Committee.

  - requires continuous interaction between NERRC and each SEA to ensure that all work is relevant, participatory and responsive.

  - should assist in identifying and solving problems as well as addressing new and emerging issues.

  - will result in improved outcomes for students with disabilities.

  - increases and enhances the amount and quality of training and information provided to professionals and parents.

* ***Collaborating***, ***networking*** and ***linking*** among RRCs and with other relevant projects and agencies:

  - will result in coordinated efforts and the exchange of knowledge and information central to the function and goals of NERRC.

- will promote enhanced services for all centers, projects and their clients.

- will use advanced communication technologies for efficient and effective gathering and dissemination of information to SEAs and other appropriate audiences.

SECTION III

Description of Project Activities and Evaluation Findings

III. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activities in the five major Goal areas referred to in Section I are described below.

Goal #1: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

NERRC teams conducted state visits to identify problems/issues, needs, resources and potential activities. At the discretion of State Directors, met with a variety of people during this process including SEA staff, LEA staff, advocacy organizations, parents and UAP/IHE representatives.

- Appointed and convened the Advisory Committee once during this period to review technical assistance and to receive input.
- Convened the State Directors on three occasions outside of the Advisory Committee to, among other things, receive update on needs.
- Designated State Liaison staff conducted state visits during this period, usually in conjunction with other planned technical assistance activities.
- State Directors and SEA staff feel comfortable contacting NERRC Director or State Liaison to discuss newly identified needs.

Goal #2: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLANNING ACTIVITY

- Using the needs assessment data, staff developed state and regional profiles.
- Needs were prioritized by NERRC staff, Technical Assistance activities were developed by NERRC teams, membership included appropriate disability groups, and overall Technical Assistance plan was compiled. It contained both regional and state specific activities.
- Technical Assistance plan was shared with the Advisory Committee, including State Directors, and other participants in the needs assessment process.

Goal #3: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVISION TO NORTHEAST STATES

Following are examples of services provided in each of the identified need areas. Additionally, four brief vignettes will serve to describe in more depth some of the technical assistance provided to the Northeast states.

RESTRUCTURING/LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT/SEA MANAGEMENT

- Convened Northeast Special Education Directors to plan a series of Regional Forums to address the "big picture" of restructuring. Three forums were planned and implemented:

  Forum 1 - Improving Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities. Jim Ysseldyke from NCEO presented.
  Forum 2 - Practical Applications of NCEO Frameworks. Mary Ann Lachat and Mary-Beth Fafard presented.
  Forum 3 - Inclusion: Team presentations/discussion by LEAs.

- Presented to regular educators at Regional Laboratory's conference on Designing Learner Centered Schools.

- Collaborated with CASE Research Committee and the Center for Policy Options in developing "future agenda for special education" for local school personnel.

- Gathered and disseminated information to SEAs and LEAs on school restructuring.

SECONDARY TRANSITION

- Conducted Regional Teleconferences for state Transition workgroup and Transition Systems Change Grantees on proposed Transition regulations and other topics.

- Convened meeting of Systems Change grantees with OSEP and National Transition Network staff around FLSA.

- Convened conference with state Transition staff and Systems Change grantees involving Vocational Education Technical Assistance Provider (University of Illinois) and Ed O'Leary from MPRRC.

- Co-sponsored a video conference with New York SEA, training several hundred local educators, parents and advocates in "Integrating Transition Planning into IEPs."

LEGAL AND POLICY ISSUES

- Convened forums (2 times per year) for SEA staff members to provide legal updates and facilitate the discussion and exchange of information on state policy and compliance ramifications.

- Conducted regular teleconferences with SEA staff to share current information in areas such as proposed regulations, assistive technology, medicaid, full inclusion, etc.

- Prepared and disseminated publications related to current topics/regulations (i.e., 504, IDEA, ADA).

- Provided training for Hearing Officers, both within the region and nationally.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Coordinated RRC involvement as the lead center in a collaboration with the National TAPP Center, planning and conducting the National conference entitled **Celebrating Diversity**.

- Assisted the Maine Parent/Professional task force in strategic planning for the evaluation and continued operation of their Parents Encouraging Parents Program.

- Conducted FAST (Families and Schools Together) training for a community team from Middletown, Connecticut while simultaneously providing training to three training teams from Connecticut, Maine and Rhode Island.

- Produced the *Recommended Practices in Home/School Collaboration* document in collaboration with the Regional Parent/Service Provider Partnership workgroup.

CSPD-CERTIFICATION

- In conjunction with the Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands, designed Northeast Regional Credentials for special educators to allow for increased teacher mobility within the Northeast Region (NY, ME,VT,RI,NH,MA,CT).

- Developed competencies for four special education credentials (General Special Educator, Teacher of Students with Intensive Special Needs, Teacher of Deaf/Hearing Impaired, and Teacher of Blind/Vision Impaired).

- Created and issued a non-funded request for proposals to testing and assessment companies for the purpose of developing competency assessment measures for the four Special Educator Credentials.

- Supported Northeast CSPD workgroup in addressing issues of systemic change including retention and recruitment of quality personnel.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Co-sponsored Early Education Institute with Vermont SEA to provide coordinated training to child care providers, preschool teachers (regular, compensatory, special education) and Head Start staff.

- Convened meetings of states in Part H extended participation (regionally and nationally) for the purpose of identifying and solving mutual problems.

- Working with other regional technical assistance providers, developed an ongoing collaborative effort which is currently focused on state and local efforts in reaching Education 2000, Goal 1.

- Convened Regional Early Childhood Workgroup meeting focused on areas of diversity and coordinated CSPD planning birth to 5.

EVALUATION

- Provided assistance to the Maine Parent and Professional group in evaluating the impact of the Maine Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) effort.

- Provided assistance to a regional Head Start Agency in designing a plan to evaluate impact and outcomes of their technical and direct assistance to staffs and families.

- Assisted VT SEA in the evaluation of local school district efforts at integration.

STUDENTS WITH SEVERE EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

- Conducted regional teleconferences with SEA staffs to identify mutual needs/concerns and to exchange information.

- Collected and disseminated SED information, resources, and materials to State Special Education Directors and staffs.

- Attended Wrap-Around Workshop and 5th Annual System of Care for Mental Health in Florida, sharing packets of information with SEAs.

- Arranged down link of CEC/NASDSE videoconferences on SED.

SEA MANAGEMENT

- Conducted strategic planning work sessions with CT SEA.

- Conducted strategic planning work sessions with MA Advisory Committee.
- Convened State Special Education Director's solution group four times during 2-year period.
- Disseminated information to State Directors on a regular basis.
- Provided consultation (direct/on-site) to New Jersey SEA management team related to restructuring and organizational renewal.

Goal #4: COLLABORATION, NETWORKING AND LINKAGE

- Participated and assisted with conference calls with OSEP officials, RRC directors and the Federal Resource Center.
- Participated in and contributed to annual OSEP Technical Assistance and Dissemination Conference.
- Participated in and assisted with the OSEP annually convened State Directors Meeting.
- Participated in teleconferences and meetings across RRC jobs alike groups (Transition, Early Childhood, Information).
- Participated and collaborated with all Federal Resource Center activities to promote RRC system communication and coordination.
- Collaborated with numerous educational and advocacy organizations to provide more coordinated technical assistance. Some of those are:
  - Rehabilitation Continuing Education Centers (Regions 1-2)
  - Regional and National TAPP programs
  - National Transition Institute
  - National Transition Network
  - NEC*TAS
  - State Assistive Technology Projects
  - Regional Chapter I Technical Assistance

- National Center for Research in Vocational Education
- Equity Assistance Center (MA and NY)
- New England Resource Access Project (Head Start)
- CEC-CASE Division
- Parent Training and Information Centers
- Social Security Administration
- Office of Civil Rights
- National Center on Educational Outcomes
- University Affiliated Programs, Vermont

Goal #5: MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Updated membership of Advisory Committee to reflect changing needs of the states (i.e., Assistive Technology, Transition Systems Change grantees).
- Convened NERRC Advisory Committee to assess work completed and plan for future technical assistance activity.
- Ensured appropriate use of human and fiscal resources.
- Submitted eight (8) quarterly reports to OSEP and exchanged evaluation reports among centers in the RRFC system.
- Implemented the state liaison system with flexibility for SEA staff to communicate with all NERRC staff.
- Implemented effective management structures internally and with other organizations within the cooperative agreement.

Northeast Regional Resource Center

CONTENT

Regional Profile of Needs

- ➢coordinating LRE/Restructuring efforts
- ➢planning effective transitions to improve student outcomes
- ➢increasing involvement of minority and "hard-to-reach" parents
- ➢assisting states in monitoring, corrective action and hearing officer training
- ➢meeting the needs of culturally diverse populations
- ➢ensuring quality CSPDs which promote recruitment/retention
- ➢addressing fiscal and programmatic issues of P.L. 99-457
- ➢improving assessment processes and practices
- ➢disseminating information on programs and practices for medically fragile, substance abusers/victims and Fragile X syndrome
- ➢applying new technologies to special education instruction and administration
- ➢identifying model programs and services for SED students
- ➢accessing medicaid and other third-party payors
- ➢networking and linking rural states and Northeast urban areas
- ➢conducting regional seminars for information sharing and problem solving
- ➢promoting interagency collaboration

10A

Examples of Technical Assistance Services

PROCESS

Information Dissemination

- ➢white papers
- ➢publications
- ➢database on priority topics
- ➢computer/manual searches on information requests
- ➢broker and provide information between and among states and regions
- ➢compendiums on priority topics

Consultation

- ➢on-site consultation with NERRC staff
- ➢telephone or electronic mail
- ➢on-site assistance from NERRC-sponsored consultants

Linking/Networking

- ➢regional or multistate forums
- ➢meetings of State Directors
- ➢supporting SEA staff to national RRC-sponsored activities
- ➢facilitating cross-state visits for SEA staffs
- ➢linking SEAs with other federally-funded programs and technical assistance providers
- ➢linking SEA staff by program area
- ➢linking SEAs nationally

Convening, Training & Demonstration

- ➢conferences for SEA staff and other constituents
- ➢training and demonstration workshops for SEA staff and other constituents
- ➢mini-conferences and workshops on priority topics in the region
- ➢regional or multistate forums
- ➢SEA technology

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NERRC 01/92

Audiences Served

As anticipated, NERRC has given most attention to the needs of the State Directors of Special Education and their staffs. Efforts were made to include other SEA staff members (non Special Education), as well, given the changing organizational structures of our state education agencies. Continued emphasis will be placed on "inclusiveness."

Services to local education administrators continue to be a high priority for State Directors of Special Education. Although many states prefer to do their own training of LEAs, and NERRC is supportive of this, in some instances NERRC expertise is found to be invaluable.

NERRC's long history of parent inclusion continues. Ongoing collaboration with Parent/Advocacy organizations (local, regional, and national), parent focused activities and parental representation at most major NERRC activities enrich our services and move states a little closer to delivering family-centered services.

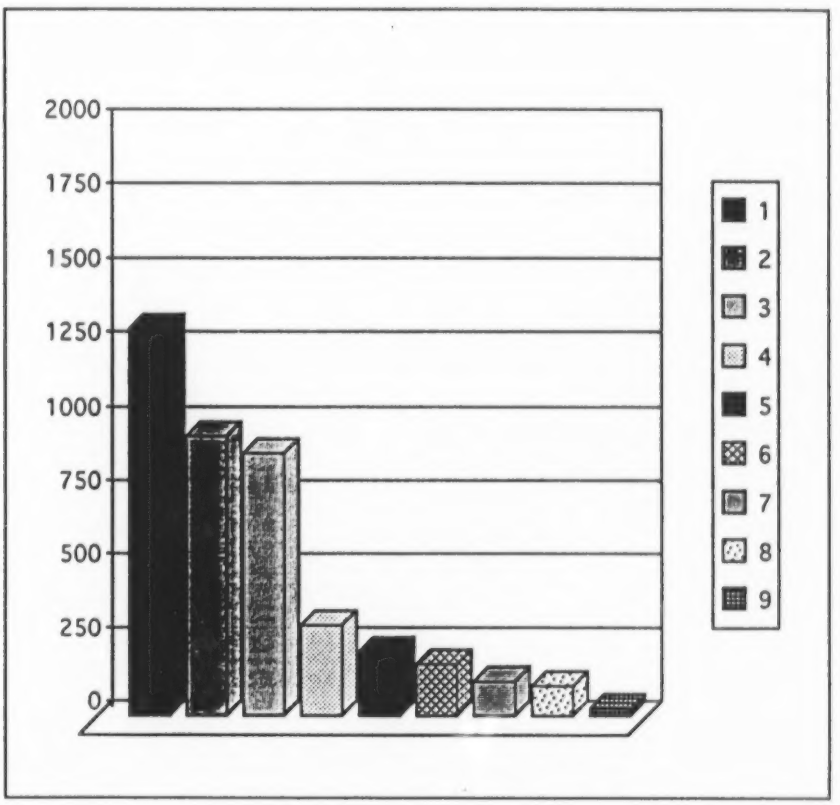
At this point in time, most of the teachers we serve are special educators, although our collaboration with the Regional Laboratory and our focus on inclusion has caused us to broaden our base. As we develop additional collaborative efforts with other technical assistance providers (Chapter I, Head Start), we expect to increase the numbers of services to regular educators.

If inclusion and school restructuring efforts are to be successful, institutions of higher education must become part of an integrated, cooperative endeavor. NERRC will continue to support and provide meaningful opportunities that include IHE.

NERRC 1991-1993

Audiences Served

SEA Administrators	1305	1
LEA Administrators	950	2
Parents	892	3
Teachers	307	4
RRC's	210	5
Technical Assistance Providers	175	6
Institutes of Higher Education	117	7
Related Services Personnel	96	8
OSEP	25	9
Total	4077	



Type of Service Provided

Consultations by phone are the most frequent type of service provided by NERRC. SEAs, LEAs, parent groups and others call for information, materials, recommendations, regulation interpretation, second opinions and resources. NERRC staff gives high priority to responding to these calls.

Although information dissemination ranks second in the services provided, the numbers do not reflect the amount of information shared with our various audiences. It is, in fact, an integral part of most of the services we provide and current information in topical areas is a high priority for the states.

NERRC's geographical area lends itself well to regional meetings, allowing for networking and information sharing across states, as well as providing opportunities for problem definition and analysis, planning and information dissemination. Jobs-alike groups meet regularly (Monitoring, CSPD, Transition, Early Childhood, State Directors) based on their current agendas (i.e., CSPD group has been meeting monthly to complete their work on the Special Education certificate).

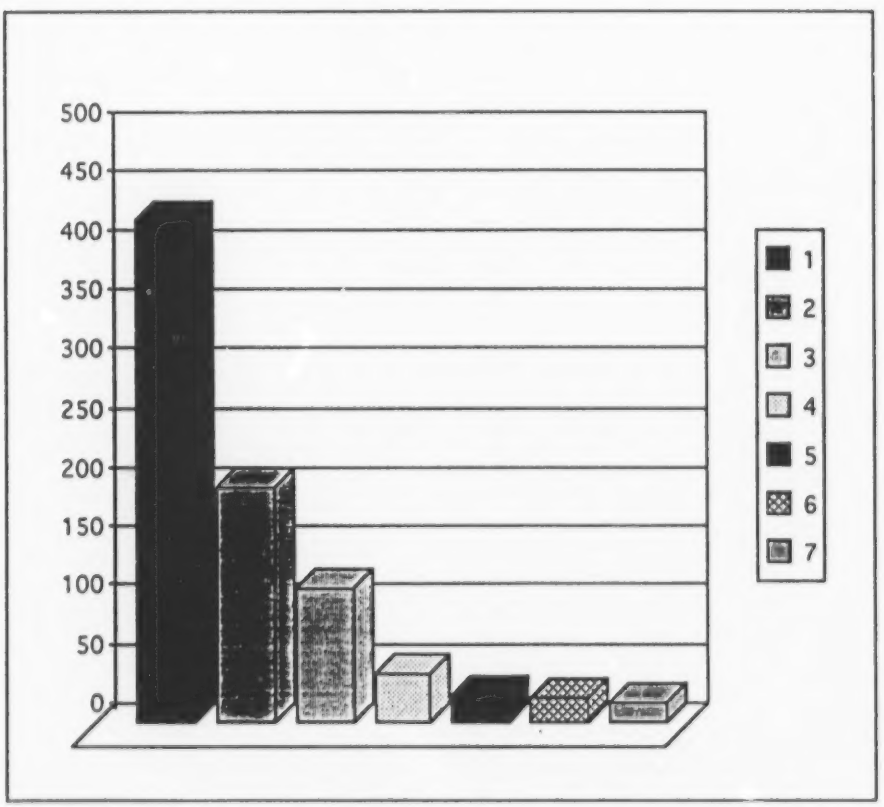
In an attempt to deliver more economical services, NERRC increased the utilization of teleconferences (thus decreasing the number of face-to-face meetings) when the service requested can be delivered effectively. NERRC also broadened its own networking efforts by linking with other agencies (National Transition Network, TAPP, RRCs, Jobs-Alike groups) through teleconferencing.

Conferences, workshops and forums are convened most often as a method for training in topical areas that address state specific or regional needs. Participants in these efforts usually represent LEAs, jobs-alike staff, other agencies and parents.

Products and publications by NERRC or the Northeast states are usually done in conjunction with technical assistance activities. NERRC does work with other RRCs to jointly produce documents.

Types of Service Provided

Consultations	1	423
Information	2	200
Meetings	3	114
Teleconference s	4	41
Products	5	23
Conferences	6	21
Workshops	7	16
Total		838



Services by Program Area

The following graph accurately represents the changing priorities of the Northeast states in the last two-year period and NERRC's services in this area.

Federal regulations, state policy and monitoring/compliance continue to be major areas of concern for states. With the new Federal Special Education (IDEA), Carl Perkins, ADA and Head Start regulations and the Rehabilitation Amendments, states have a need for interpretation of the new regulations as well as understanding the new case law surrounding the many issues. Additionally, there is a need to try to understand the relatedness of these regulations to each other and the implications for policy development and financing at the state level. NERRC has been able to respond to many issues and concerns at both the local, regional and national level.

Parent/School Collaboration activities continue to increase as NERRC staff becomes more proficient at integrating this topic into other service areas. Although work continues at the regional and state level, more activities are occurring at the local level in order that consumers, parents, and advocates may be actively involved.

A priority for Special Education Directors has been the quality of pre-service training for special education teachers. In response to this need, NERRC launched an intensive two-year project, with a regional workgroup, to develop a regional credential. The workgroup met monthly for two years, in addition to extensive work by NERRC staff.

As NERRC expanded the Least Restrictive Environment area to include the "big picture" of restructuring, outcomes and inclusion, and at the same time became more proactive, services in this area increased. It is anticipated that this trend will continue.

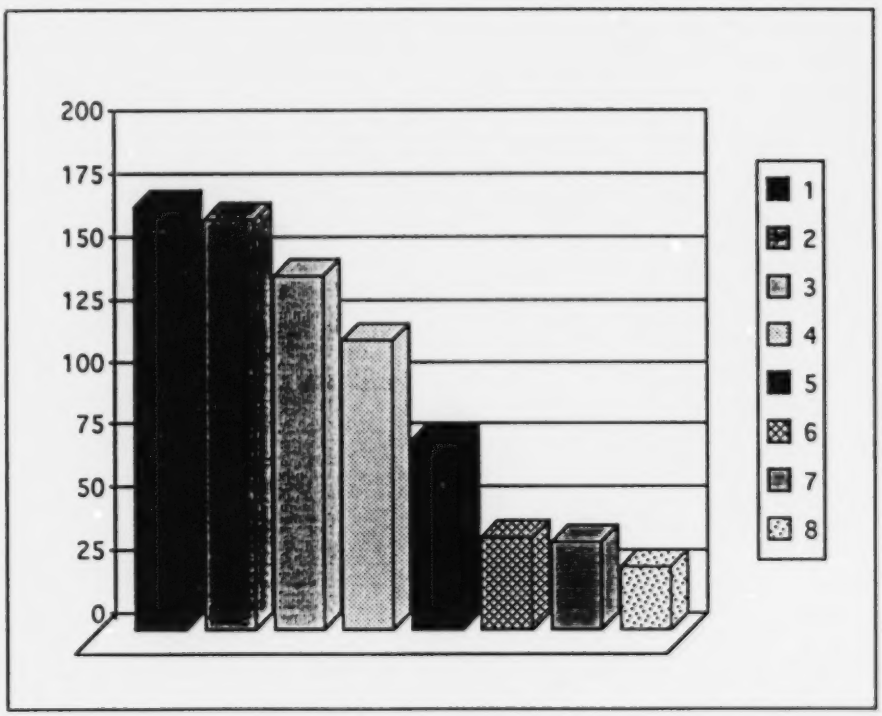
During this two-year period NERRC has worked extensively with states around the new Transition regulations and the Carl Perkins and Vocational Rehabilitation changes. Information dissemination has been a significant part of service provision as well as linking Special Education, Vocational Education and Vocational Rehabilitation mandates and staffs.

Cultural Diversity is a program area which NERRC is attempting to integrate with several other areas. During this period, Early Childhood/Parent/Schools and Diversity were successfully combined in several activities.

Early Childhood has been an area of decreasing activity. As states become more familiar with Part H regulations and move into implementation, and Section 619 incorporated all of the eligible 3-5 year-olds into programs, there appear to be fewer needs in this area. NEC*TAS seems able to meet many specific needs of states and to provide opportunities for sharing and networking at the national level. NERRC efforts have expanded to broader, more inclusive Early Childhood issues and collaborative efforts across TA providers.

Services by Program Areas

Monitoring	1	168
Parents/Schools	2	163
CSPD	3	141
Restructuring/Outcomes/Inclusion	4	115
Secondary Transition	5	75
Cultural Diversity	6	37
Early Childhood	7	35
Other	8	25
School/Special education funding		
Evaluation		
Strategic planning		
Technology		
Total		759



Vignettes of NERRC Leadership and Support
E.R. Wilkens

"TAA Bridges"

Spontaneous. Responsive. Proactive. Prompt. Useful. These adjectives are used by clients to describe the technical assistance provided by NERRC through the efforts of Art Cernosia in the areas of funding flexibility and regulatory issues.

Cernosia's services, which span national, regional, state and local arenas, often begin with a stack of pink message slips. On a typical mid-morning following a staff meeting, he will find six message inquiries waiting on his desk. These daily phone contacts, particularly from SEAs and RRCs, present questions regarding legal and funding issues often framed by "What is going on elsewhere?", "Who is doing what?", "What recommendations do you have?", "What material can you send me?". These inquiries help Cernosia stay in touch with "real life" issues such as monitoring responsibilities, inclusion/LRE, private schools, personnel standards, procedural safeguards and eligibility standards.

One such phone inquiry typically suggests a general concern implying connections to several SEAs. These substantive needs such as monitoring issues are identified often through daily contacts. Cernosia then determines how best to address them. For instance, he has regularly scheduled teleconferences with SEAs in the Northeast for which there are typically two agenda items; an identified issue of common interest and a networking/problem-solving discussion.

Often those regional teleconferences combine with the daily phone contacts to suggest agenda items for Regional Forum planning such as the Forum addressing monitoring responsibilities associated with the issue of inclusion held April 1993 in Rhode Island. There are also periodic national RRC teleconference agendas and multi-regional activities such as the one in June 1992 addressing SEA monitoring issues which are related to original phone inquiries.

While most of these services are appropriately at the SEA and RRC level, the topics and issues occasionally serve as springboards for SEA requests for specific service to LEA representatives such as local directors, parents, advocates and hearing officers.

The range of services from LEA to SEA to RRC is represented by a variety of products; information packets, outlines, opinion summaries, teleconferences and forums. There is even the spontaneous phone participation in an SEA department meeting to provide opinion and interpretation on such topics as student discipline issues and the authority of states to implement corrective actions with LEA's.

Cernosia's capacity to respond to daily telephone inquiries allows him to address a host of issues for a variety of clients with an array of services. Clients appreciate the spontaneity, responsiveness and utility of these services. Cernosia attributes his capacity to the "bridges which have been built" often beginning with those pink phone slips.

"Pieces of a Child's Life: One Look at Technical Assistance"

Karen Thomas Mikkelsen considers her TA service grounded in the philosophy embodied by George Flynn's observation that, "All good learning takes place within the context of a valued relationship." Whether in a national, regional, state or local arena, Mikkelsen strives to identify strengths, the value of individuals to each other, and the essence of relationship building as cornerstones to improved school-community partnerships. Her conviction is that such partnerships as those between families and schools, between regular and special educators and between administrators and teachers, enhance capacities to better serve children and youth.

In the national arena Mikkelsen cites the 1991 National Technical Assistance to Parents Conference as an exceptional activity celebrating the dual themes of diversity and collaboration. This conference, with NERRC as the lead RRC, involved all RRCs as both participants and contributors.

Regional impact such as NERRC's having established and maintained more formal, mutual working relationships with the Parent Training and Information Centers, has seen improved relationships between SDEs and PTIs. These developments are in part thanks to NERRC's participation at regional PTI conferences and including PTI representatives in planning and implementing NERRC activities in collaboration with SDEs such as the Families and Schools Together (FAST) training.

Also at the regional level, NERRC collaborated with the regional Parent/Service Provider Workgroup to develop and produce the manual "Recommended Practices in Home/School Collaboration," a resource compendium of successful practices throughout the region. This Workgroup was comprised of parents, PTI representatives, SDE members, LEA officials and NERRC personnel.

Two state level examples reflect the lasting impact of these kinds of service. First, during the past five years in Vermont NERRC has collaborated with the State Department of Education, supported also by the local PTI Center and the University of Vermont, to offer what has become an annual conference on Family/School Collaborations. A result of this partnership is that during the past two years over forty school districts have developed teams of parents, school personnel and board members to address family/school relationships. Second, NERRC has worked annually

with the Massachusetts State Advisory Commission to assist in mission development, strategic planning, and of particular interest to Mikkelsen, collaboration within the Commission. The Families and Schools Together (FAST) training, as offered in Middletown, CT in the fall of 1992, as well as the forty LEA collaboration teams developed in Vermont are directly products of Mikkelsen's service through NERRC.

Whether information packets, workshops or inservice training sessions, Mikkelsen's personal credo neatly complements NERRC's commitment and the RRC principals of capacity building and client centeredness. "I'm very involved personally in my own school district...I want to be sure that what I tell people is based on what I've actually experienced...like my own little lab. And it gives me the privilege to take the resources I find and apply them in very real ways."

As she puts it, "The central, common thread" throughout her work is that people who have pieces of a child's life should be working together to better support that child. That is the essence of the technical assistance Mikkelsen provides through NERRC.

"Collaborative Credentials"

A rural school district in northern Vermont has advertised for six months for a "school-based learning specialist." Local, state and regional classifieds, trade journal advertisements, even placement services have failed to fill the position. The district is in the midst of significant restructuring, is redefining roles across both regular and special education and is reorienting its system to an outcomes perspective. In such a setting what are the credentials? Which competencies matter the most? How compatible to the system's needs are candidates from throughout the region?

A school official is quoted in Issues and Options (University of Maryland at College Park and Westat, Inc., 1992, p. 25) as saying that, "The key to the whole restructuring process is staff development." Whether intentional restructuring or simply responsive personnel development, attention must be paid to recruitment and retention of qualified personnel best able to serve the needs of those with disabilities.

C.G. Shaffer of the Northeast Regional Resource Center has served as the Center's lead in a two year collaborative with the Regional Laboratory dedicated to the two goals of retention and recruitment of quality personnel and the increase of minority personnel within the region. This cumulative relationship, expanded from the Northeast Common Market Project, created the Special Education/Certification Working Group focusing on revising competencies for various proposed certification credentials and developing valid assessment instruments.

Shaffer's efforts have helped draw together essential players from throughout the region: participation from The Regional Lab and NERRC, regular communication with SEA's of the region, coordination with Chief State School Officers, feedback from states' attorneys and input from OSERS. This uniquely collaborative effort which included iterative stakeholder review reflects the emerging professional landscape for educators. Circumstances once considered one's own (or someone else's) problems are now being seen as challenges to share.

In the northeast region those personnel challenges are being met in part through the services provided by Shaffer to the Special Education/Certification Working Group. Conducting needs assessments, identifying and sharing key research and resources, planning agendas, preparing and distributing materials, conducting meetings, revising documents, disseminating minutes and evaluating progress represent the breadth of service and initiative required by this innovative regional effort.

Thanks to that service and initiative, the credentials and competency questions of the northern Vermont school district have met the test of stakeholder participation and scrutiny. The non-funded RFP for Services to Develop and Administer Regional Certification Assessments for Special Education Personnel has been awarded and work is beginning. The system of certification is changing as its environment shifts. Such change is not inherent to the system itself . In this case the people primarily responsible are those collaborating from NERRC and The Regional Lab's Special Education/Certification Working Group. Once again we in public education see that, "It is people who change systems." (Issues and Options, p. 67.).

"Relationship Building"

"Be slow to fall into friendship, but when thou art in, continue firm and constant." Socrates' advice is also commentary on relationships. Not surprisingly, organizations, like the people who comprise them, are slow to form relationships. Typically, organizational change initiated today will not fully emerge until three years hence.

Undaunted by such a timeline, key technical assistance providers in the northeast region acknowledged their desires for collaboration and in the spring of 1991 formed The Northeast Technical Assistance Collaborative. Its members include The Chapter 1 Rural TA Center in Portsmouth, NH, the Chapter 1 TA Center also in Portsmouth, the Education Development Center in Newton, MA, the Metropolitan Center for Educational Research, Development and Training in New York, the New England Center for Equity Assistance in Andover, MA, the Northeast Regional Resource Center in Burlington, VT, The Regional Laboratory in Andover, MA and the Technical Assistance for Parents Program Project in Concord, NH.

Drawing funding from the U.S. Department of Education, OPP, the Department of Human Services, ACYF, the U.S. Department of Education, Title II, the U.S. Department of Education, OSEP and the U.S. Department of Education OERI, this Collaborative designed a project intended to "explore the array of perspectives present in communities that facilitate or inhibit attainment of National Education Goal 1" of school readiness for all children.

Members began their relationship building with an almost bemused recognition that the individual sponsoring agencies really did want active collaboration, not mere parchment partners. Much as with teacher teams attempting to join special educators and regular educators, these agency representatives needed time to learn how to collaborate. With the assistance of a paid, outside facilitator, they struggled through the familiar stages of frustration, pain, competition and aggravation. A key to the success of this stage was the participation of agency directors, including NERRC Director, Ken Baker, active testimony to the commitment to collaboration.

As our language often reveals our truths, their language began to reflect their developing relationships seen in the often subtle shifts from first person singular to first person plural pronouns. I and mine had become we and ours. They started challenging themselves with questions like, "What could we do together that would be beneficial to our clients?".

The focus on early childhood and specifically National Goal 1 was a logical choice for the group given the emphasis on collaboration in Part H/Early Childhood, represented by Lois Holbrook of NERRC, and that many participating agencies served pre-school age children. Having identified a community site for the case study, met with community stakeholders, gathered information, conducted over sixty teleconferences with interagency service providers, the partners are currently in the midst of conducting in-depth interviews.

Still to come are community mapping, data interpretation, accuracy checks, feedback to data site, case study presentation and community stakeholder meeting. The essential question is, "Will it be worth it? Will a collaborative be better able to influence law, policy, resources, services and training in such areas as health, education, family services, juvenile justice, substance abuse and employment?" Will the messy process of frustration, competition and challenge be a journey worth taking? As with personal relationships, the intended and anticipated benefits may well be delightfully surpassed even by the unintended and unanticipated. It seems that the Northeast Technical Assistance Collaborative has come to expect that.

SECTION IV

Project Impact

IV. PROJECT IMPACT

Feedback from SEA staff and other clients in our northeast region consistently report that NERRC technical assistance activities: are highly responsive to changing or critical needs; increase awareness of and access to relevant information and successful practices in the field; and provide valuable opportunities for networking among colleagues within and between states. A sampling of specific effects of the project's activities on the field of education for children with disabilities follows.

- As a result of regional conferences on transition and inclusive education, states conducted interagency and organizational activities to improve transition services, and initiated implementation of "zero reject" policies and practices.

- As a result of the development and use of the FAST (Families and Schools Together: Collaboration in a Pluralistic Society) training package, schools and communities and families and educators in culturally and economically diverse communities are improving communication and cooperation.

- As a direct result of training Hearing Officers and SEA/LEA staff on legal requirements, the state policies, monitoring procedures and complaint resolution processes are revised to reflect new legal developments.

- As a result of the development and implementation of a regional credential for special education personnel, qualified, competent teachers in the northeast will be better able to meet the diverse needs of children and youth with disabilities.

- As a result of a Leadership Conference sponsored by NERRC, Connecticut developed a state planning team to draft proposed regulations and model programs for the education of students with severe emotional disturbance.

- As a result of convening a NERRC regional group of Part H Coordinators who are in extended participation, and a similar group at the national level, an OSEP/NEC-TAS sponsored information and problem-solving meeting was held for this group of concerned states.

- As a result of including the six state Transition Systems Change Grantees in the NERRC Transition Workgroup, several of the State Education Departments and Institutions of Higher Education across the region are now collaborating.

- As a result of NERRC's support to the New Jersey SEA, a parent/professional training package was developed, and training is conducted several times a year by all four Learning Resource Centers.

- As a result of NERRC technical assistance to increase awareness about inclusive schools, Massachusetts and New Jersey engaged in statewide inclusion training and staff development.

- As a result of producing the RRC State Reform document, and the document's direct utility to states, the RRCs and NASDSE are continuing work to create uniform state restructuring profiles and matrices.

- As a result of NERRC's development of the **Recommended Practices in Home/School Collaboration** document, other RRCs are using this resource and it is being disseminated to states beyond the Northeast Region.

- As a result of NERRC-initiated work and exemplary Vermont **Success by Six** initiatives, Northeast federally-funded TA providers are responding collaboratively to Education 2000, Goal #1--**All Children Ready to Learn.**

- As a direct result of NERRC technical assistance, forty school districts in Vermont developed plans for home/school collaboration.

- As a result of disseminating Vermont Act 230 information and sharing consultation and resources, NERRC facilitated other states to address funding issues.

- As a result of a NERRC co-sponsored interactive television broadcast, several hundred educators, parents, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and staff from Centers for Independent Living in New York received training in the area of integrating Transition Planning into Individualized Education Plans.

PRODUCTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Creating a Rich Mosaic

Program information, strategies, ideas and a resource list promoting collaborative relationships between families and educators in culturally diverse communities. Designed for state and local school personnel, staff of parent training and information centers and parent leadership personnel.

Recommended Practices in Home/School Collaboration

Descriptions and summaries of successfully implemented projects and procedures encouraging collaboration between family members and educational staff.

The *ENHANCE* Program - Trinity College

A brochure describing the history, goals and activities of this continuing education program for adult learners with disabilities. Two articles written by the NERRC editor about the *ENHANCE* Program were published in the Vermont ASCD Newsletter.

Guidelines for Occupational and Physical Therapy Services in Vermont Schools

Practical and legal information, definitions of roles and procedures, and a chart of services are contained in this comprehensive booklet designed for and with teachers, administrators, parents, advocates and therapists.

Transition Services: A Legal Overview

Focusing on the movement of students to post-secondary experiences, this document discusses related IDEA amendments and regulations, IEP development, interagency issues, and interpretations of other pertinent Acts and programs.

Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP)

A description of the Maine PEP Program including operational procedures and the effects of the Program on parents and professionals.

Chittenden County Respite Resources

A brochure describing programs offering respite services to families of individuals with disabilities, including names, addresses and telephone numbers of service providers.

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Articles written by Karen Thomas Mikkelsen appeared in ***VT Leading/Learning Magazine*** and ***Business Education Partnerships***. The articles listed below were also written and published by NERRC staff.

Special Education Law Up-date

Assistive Technology: Legal and Policy Issues

National School Reform Issues and Students with Disabilities

SECTION V

Further Information

V. Further Information

Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC) and Institute for Program Development, Trinity College of Vermont (IPD) Brochures.

Service Delivery

Technical assistance is provided through **information dissemination** (database, publications, compendiums on priority topics); **consultation** (on site, by telephone or electronic mail); **linking/networking** (regional or multistate forums, supporting SEA staff to national RRC-sponsored activities); and **convening, training and demonstration** (conferences and workshops for SEA staff and other constituents on priority topics).....

...serving Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont

For more information, contact:

Northeast Regional Resource Center
Institute for Program Development
Trinity College of Vermont
208 Colchester Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401
Phone: (802) 658-5036
FAX: (802) 658-7435
TDD: (802) 860-1428

Northeast Regional Resource Center
Institute for Program Development
Trinity College of Vermont
208 Colchester Avenue
Burlington, VT 05401

Northeast Regional Resource Center

NERRC

Providing leadership and support within the Northeast States to promote a quality education for all learners

Overview

The Northeast Regional Resource Center is a program of the Institute for Program Development at Trinity College of Vermont.

NERRC has been operating since September of 1980 through contracts and cooperative agreements with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. As one of six regional centers and a federal center in a national network, its activities are authorized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Mission

NERRC staff provide special education technical assistance for program development to eight State Departments of Education in the Northeast and, through them, local school districts and associated organizations. The programs and services of NERRC are specifically designed to assist State Education Agencies in assuring that educational policies and procedures result in quality programs for students with disabilities.

Goals

The goals of the Northeast Regional Resource Center staff toward achieving its mission are:

- To identify and address persistent and emerging problems in implementing quality educational programs.
- To assist with developing, identifying, disseminating and replicating successful programs and practices to improve educational and related services to students with disabilities and their families.
- To gather and disseminate relevant information through workshops, seminars, consultations, networking and product development.
- To coordinate program activities with other Regional Resource Centers and technical assistance projects conducted by the Department of Education.

Program Areas

NERRC staff currently provide technical assistance for program development in the following areas:

- *National, State, and Local Initiatives in School Restructuring/Reform*
- *Assessment and Outcomes*
- *Cultural Diversity*
- *Personnel Development*
- *Legal and Regulatory Issues*
- *Family/Schools Collaboration*
- *Least Restrictive Environment*
- *Transition Planning for Students*
- *Early Childhood Services*
- *Technology*
- *At-Risk and Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) Youth*

Vermont Facilitator Center

The Vermont Facilitator Center represents the National Diffusion Network, a federally sponsored, national network of exemplary programs in education.

Vermont's State Facilitator serves as a link between NDN programs and teachers, administrators, parents, and others who are interested in implementing the programs. Current demonstrator projects being adopted by Vermont schools include:

- ▲ CRISS - Content Reading Including Study Systems, which provides reading and study skills across the curriculum.
- ▲ CIRC - Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition, which applies principles of cooperative learning to classroom language and reading arts programs.
- ▲ FAST - Foundational Approaches to Science Teaching, which involves students in the processes of inquiry and research.
- ▲ SITE - Successful Inservice Through Turnkey Education, which uses a problem-solving approach to learning new mathematical concepts and skills.

The Vermont Facilitator Center supports the Vermont Department of Education and other educational organizations in their statewide initiatives.

VFC - (802) 658-7429

Transition II, Inc.

Transition II, Inc. provides employment services to adults who are labeled mentally retarded and reside in Chittenden County. Funded through the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, the goal of Transition II is to increase the opportunities of individuals with disabilities for securing and maintaining employment in the competitive job market.

Employment Specialists from Transition II provide a variety of services which include:

- ▲ job development services until employment is secured,
- ▲ on-site job training lasting 1 to 4 months, and
- ▲ long-term follow-up services maintaining contact with the employer and employee to ensure that the job is maintained once the Employment Specialist is no longer on-site.

Each year Transition II places 10-12 individuals into new jobs but may work with as many as 20 to 25 individuals throughout the year. In addition, staff at Transition II work with local high schools to assist students with disabilities who are transitioning from school to work upon graduation.

Transition II - (802) 658-3996

For additional information, write or call
The Institute for Program Development
at Trinity College of Vermont
208 Colchester Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401
Tel: (802) 658-2889 - FAX (802) 658-7435

Promoting excellence in education and human services

The Institute for Program Development

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TRINITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT

OVERVIEW

In May of 1980, The Institute for Program Development at Trinity College of Vermont began initiatives in a variety of outreach program development activities in education and human services. These activities serve local school districts, state departments of education in the Northeast, and audiences throughout the United States.

SERVICES

Since 1980 Institute staff have initiated, administered, supervised and provided support for a number of externally-funded programs. They have facilitated local, state and national meetings linking educators, administrators, parents and service providers to improve the quality, coordination and integration of education and human services. They have also provided services in the areas of grant development, program evaluation, computer technology and legal and regulatory practices in special and compensatory education.

MISSION

The primary mission of The Institute for Program Development is to foster program development contributing to educational and human service improvement. Service integration, quality of services and coordination among the many federal, state and local service provider organizations and recipients of education or human services are the focus of IPD's efforts. The Institute promotes enterprise, innovation and coordinated program improvement through its services, projects and development efforts.

ACTIVITIES

IPD is involved in a variety of activities and services, including:

- ▲ Evaluating Head Start's Family Center Project which provides intense support and linkages to empower parents coping with substance abuse, unemployment, illiteracy and other family problems; and
- ▲ Administering funds for various State of Vermont projects, including the Surrogate Parent Program, Special Education Monitoring, Local Standards Boards and Common Core of Learning.

Northeast Regional Resource Center

The NERRC staff provide Special Education technical assistance and program development to eight State Departments of Education in the Northeast and their respective school districts. They facilitate conferences, workshops, seminars, product development, networking, consultation and information dissemination.

These services address the challenges, needs and goals in the provision of special education. Current topics include:

- ▲ Least Restrictive Environment
- ▲ Early Childhood
- ▲ Transition Planning for Students
- ▲ Parent/Professional Collaboration
- ▲ National, State, and Local Initiatives in School Restructuring/Reform
- ▲ At-Risk and SED Youth
- ▲ Cultural Diversity
- ▲ Technology
- ▲ Outcomes Assessment
- ▲ Legal and Regulatory Issues
- ▲ Personnel Development

The NERRC staff gather and disseminate relevant information on current educational topics; identify best practices and model programs; consult, link and provide training to improve educational and related services to students with disabilities and their families.

NERRC is one of six cooperating centers and a Federal Center in a national network funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs.

NERRC - (802) 658-5036

Vermont Elementary Science Project

The Vermont Elementary Science Project offers a teacher enhancement program for elementary educators in the Champlain Valley region of Vermont. The National Science Foundation awarded to The NETWORK, Inc. a grant to implement recommendations on teacher development in science based on reports from the National Center for Improving Science Education. The Foundation's mission is to provide an extensive effort of sustained support to improve the teaching and learning of elementary school science.

Teams of school administrators and teachers participate in a two-day planning conference, a two-week comprehensive summer institute presenting a hands-on approach to the teaching and learning of physics, four day-long workshops and regular site visits by project staff for problem-solving and support.

The VESP improves the teaching of science through:

- ▲ intensive teacher development
- ▲ hands-on learning
- ▲ curriculum development
- ▲ assessment procedures (portfolio)
- ▲ restructuring pre-service education
- ▲ telecommunications linking schools

VESP - (802) 658-3664

SECTION VI

Statement of Assurance

VI. Statement of Assurance

Two copies of the final report dated August 30, 1993 have been sent to:

ERIC/OSEP Special Project,
ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children
Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091-1589

A copy of the final report has been sent to:

HEATH Resource Center
One Dupont Circle
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036-1193

National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education
Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091-1589

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013-1492

The Technical Assistance for Parent Programs Project (TAPP)
Federation for Children with Special Needs
95 Berkeley Street
Suite 104
Boston, MA 02116

The National Diffusion Network
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20208-5645

The Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP)
Technical Assistance Center
Georgetown University
2233 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Suite 215
Washington, DC 20007

MidSouth Regional Resource Center
University of Kentucky
114 Mineral Industries Building
Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0051

South Atlantic Regional Resource Center
Florida Atlantic University
1236 North University Drive
Plantation, FL 33322

Great Lakes RRC
700 Ackerman Road/Suite 440
Columbus, OH 43202

Mountain Plains RRC
Utah State University
1780 North Research Parkway/Suite 112
Logan, UT 84321

Western RRC
Clinical Services Building
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

Federal Resource Center
Academy for Educational Development
1255 23rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037